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ABSTRACT

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers, has recognized the new challenges facing school leaders, and has developed standards for effective educational leadership. This paper addresses the turning of the attention of the ISLLC to professional development linked to these standards. Movement to link the standards to professional development is occurring on three fronts. A professional association of school administrators is exploring the possibility of developing an advanced certification program for administrators. In addition, five states and the District of Columbia are working with the Educational Testing Service to test assessments for school leader relicensure. Policymakers in 29 states and 12 national associations aré also working to link the new standards to state policy frameworks. In the District of Columbia, where the declining achievement of students is a major concern, the school system has formally adopted the ISLLC standards as the foundation on which to build a unified hiring, development, and evaluation system. The ISLLC standards, which have been adopted at a critical point in the school system's improvement efforts, will be the lens through which decisions regarding candidate identification and selection are seen, as well as the foundation for all professional and staff development for school leaders. The District of Columbia expects that its commitment of time and resources to the standards implementation process will result in improvement in achievement levels for all students. (Contains five references.) (SLD)

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Linking the ISLLC Standards to Professional Development and Relicensure

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Introduction

If school leadership is truly to become a profession, it is crucial that we accept responsibility for lifelong improvement of our practitioners. This professional growth is shaped by emerging trends and current technology of the profession. Staying current should be defined by the profession, not by idiosyncratic interests of individual practitioners. The professional development needs of school leaders have been ignored or undervalued for far too long. A focus on student standards and outcomes, a collaborative leadership model, broader community involvement, off-campus learning sites, new instructional techniques, data-based decision making, and technology are but a few examples of change faced by practicing school leaders in the last decade or two.

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), has recognized these changes and has undertaken the challenge of raising the bar for the practice of school leadership. Through its Standards for School Leaders ISLLC has provided a common vision for effective educational leadership. As the development of the leadership standards was drawing to a close, ISLLC member states and associations recognized that use of the standards to strengthen the professional development of school leaders was a logical extension of the Consortium's work, and requested the director of ISLLC to pursue funding for a project to link the Standards to professional development, including as a major component, the design of a professional development portfolio. Until this time no interstate professional development standards were available to provide guidance or direction for improvement of practice of school leaders. This paper will address the turning of ISLLC's attention to professional development linked to the Standards.

Movement to link the ISLLC Standards to professional development is actually occurring in three areas. First, the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), and the American Association for School Administrators (AASA) are exploring the possibility of developing an advanced "certification" program for accomplished administrators. Second, five states and the District of Columbia are collaborating in a unique partnership with the Educational Testing Service to craft assessments and other policy tools from the Standards in the service of relicensure. Third, policy makers in 29 states and 12 national associations are working together to link the Standards to state policy frameworks for quality professional development for school leaders. The Standards Based Professional Development (SBPD) project itself builds on the vision articulated in the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders that all students can learn, that school leaders should have a thorough understanding of teaching and learning, and that schooling is a collaborative process.

The ISLLC Standards and the indicators that define them describe what a principal should know and be able to do to be an effective leader. They also guide the selection of activities that should be used for quality professional development that will enhance the knowledge, performances, and dispositions of those principals. There are six standards, 44 knowledge indicators, 43 dispositions, and 96 performances. All of these will not need to be addressed by any single individual in professional development in-service, however, they can be powerful tools in helping school leaders determine those areas which need attention. Indeed, in a study of Indiana principals, Coutts (1997), concluded that principals who do not adhere to the ISLLC Standards are likely to find these weak areas used as reasons for termination. He concludes that the Standards are helpful as guides to professional development, and that states should move

quickly to have the Standards used as the base for professional development programs.

NAESP, NASSP, AASA Certification Proposal

These three educational administration associations, working with the American Collegiate Testing Company (ACT), are exploring the feasibility of a national certification program for accomplished school leaders based in part on the ISLLC Standards. According to their announcement dated September 22, 1997, they expect the program to "...provide principals and superintendents an opportunity to demonstrate a wide range of leadership skills and obtain an Educational Leadership Certificate." These associations see this "National Board for Educational Leaders Certification" as a way for advancement and a basis for incentive pay.

Their preliminary design will require candidates to demonstrate leadership knowledge and skill in a performance based assessment center and to provide evidence of current accomplishments through a portfolio. Based on the ISLLC Standards, it will go beyond licensure regulations. Included in the assessment center will be a computer based assessment of knowledge in key areas of educational management. Initial specifications call for the design of two portfolios---one for superintendents and one for principals. Using ACT's "work sample description", candidates will be asked to provide artifacts in each category to be assessed. Categories will be job related and not just "busy work".

An 18 member Board will provide feedback to candidates keyed to opportunities for professional development offered by the three associations. They also plan to implement a periodic renewal requirement to have those school leaders certified in their program demonstrate that they remain current in their knowledge and proficient in their skills. A task force composed

of staff from the three associations is presently exploring the development of this program.

There are many issues yet to be resolved by the planning group for this new program. What is the role of ISLLC and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration? Will there be seamless progress toward professional expertise or will there continue to be an uncoordinated mix of "professional development" opportunities? Will the Board include a broad spectrum of stakeholders, thus making it independent of control by those who conceivably would be certified by themselves?

This new certification program being considered by NAESP, NASSP, and AASA could conceivably be an option in states where licensure renewal is required for school leaders. It is also important to provide a challenge to school leaders which recognizes accomplishments beyond state licensure requirements. If planned well, this National Board could cooperate with the ISLLC states and others to relate the Board's work to the ISLLC Standards and state licensure criteria. This presumes that the sponsoring associations' requirements will be at least as rigorous as the states' renewal requirements. Since states are responsible for licensing, the only way this "certification" could be used for even relicensure is if a state approves such a use for the "Advanced Certificate".

The Licensure Assessments Partnership

The strongest driver for reform of preparation programs and professional development models will be the newly developed licensure assessments designed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for ISLLC. Development funds have been provided by Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Illinois, and the District of Columbia. Until these five courageous

states and the District of Columbia stepped to the forefront, there had been no strong assessment on which to base licensure decisions for school leaders. Through ISLLC, the charge to ETS was to develop an innovative, performance based assessment for the initial licensing of beginning school principals. A second phase, due for completion in 1999, is the development of a portfolio to be used for licensure and/or relicensure.

These assessments are focused on the ISLLC vision of leadership based on the premise that the professional practice of school leaders must be firmly grounded in the knowledge and understanding of the practice of teaching and learning. The assessments are also innovative in design in that they are based on the most recent developmental work on large scale, complex assessments. Our colleagues from ETS discuss this aspect of the project in a separate paper.

Phase one of the assessment, an applied knowledge test, now titled the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA), is completed and was administered for the first time in Mississippi in July 1997. National administrations of the test will begin in October 1998. Phase 2, the development of a licensure portfolio has just started. The SLLA and the portfolio are anchored on the ISLLC Standards and focus on teaching and learning. Tasks are based on authentic situations and cut across standards. Portfolios, in particular, will be designed to generate responses using a range of mediums, e.g., writing, videotape, audiotape, graphics.

This portfolio is to complement the School Leaders Licensure Assessment. Its focus will be to document the continued standards based practice of all school leaders who have been actively engaged in school leadership positions for one to five years. The development team (comprised of representatives from the six funding states) expects such a portfolio to be completed in two years.

At a recent meeting of the development team it was agreed that the portfolio should provide evidence of the practitioner's involvement in school and/or district improvement efforts that are centered on advancing student achievement and should offer evidence of the practitioner's sustained involvement in professional development activities. This portfolio should represent a "natural harvest" of information. A common theme for portfolio artifacts of practice should be the school leader as a reflective practitioner, a professional who assesses needs, collects relevant information, plans actions based on thoughtful analysis of that information, implements those plans, evaluates the outcomes, and modifies the next sequence of activities accordingly. Thus, the team's two overarching goals: (1) school improvement and (2) self-growth.

Although the assessments being developed for the states by ETS focus on licensure, the design parameters established by the states will make it impossible for a person to emerge after a preparation program based on the standards and assessments or the completion of the licensure portfolio without "growing." In a manner of speaking, this creates a shift in power from the assessor to the assessed, particularly in selecting preparation programs and, when completing a portfolio, in selection of tasks, material, and methods of presentation. On the other hand, state licensing agencies must provide support to candidates, and equal access issues must be addressed.

The intent of ISLLC since its inception over four years ago is to raise the bar for effectiveness of school leaders. The assessments developed by ETS and the Standards Based Professional Development products (to be discussed in the following section) are forward looking and do not codify the school leaders job as it presently exists. Data generated from these assessments will inform preparation programs. The Standards and the assessments both look forward to the 21st century.

Standards Based Professional Development (SBPD)

At the March 1996 meeting of the Consortium the members requested funding be pursued for a project to link school leaders standards to professional development after initial licensing. The Pew Charitable Trusts generously agreed to fund the SBPD project and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) agreed to enter into a full partnership with ISLLC and continue as an active participant. The project is based on the following premises:

Premises

- All work will be driven by the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders;
- The emphasis will continue to be on learner centered leadership;
- The project is for design and planning, not delivery of professional development programs;
- States could opt to use models of professional development and the Standards as a basis for relicensure; and
- Specific attention will be given to developing a prototype professional development portfolio.

Anticipated Outcomes

Specific outcomes and products to be completed by the close of the project in the Spring of 1999 include

(1) common interstate propositions of quality professional development which will provide guidance and direction for the improvement of practicing school administrators,

(2) identification of models of quality professional development that are also compatible with the ISLLC Standards,

(3) a prototype professional development portfolio and recommendations for implementation,

(4) recommendations for connecting professional development to relicensure, and

(5) recommendations to guide policy discussions regarding portability of professional development experiences across state borders.

Professional Development Standards

Through large and small group processes, including careful review of staff development standards from a variety of sources, the member states and associations crafted the following *Propositions of Quality Professional Development for School Leaders* to guide the Consortium's

work on Standards Based Professional Development:

> Quality professional development validates teaching and learning as the central activities of the school

> Quality professional development engages all school leaders in planful, integrated, career-long learning to improve student achievement

> Quality professional development promotes collaboration to achieve organizational goals while meeting individual needs

> Quality professional development models effective learning processes

> Quality professional development incorporates measures of accountability that direct attention to valued learning outcomes.

ISLLC's Collaborative Professional Development Process - A Leadership Portfolio

A twelve member workgroup was selected to draft a framework and implementation recommendations for the portfolio. Practitioner names were solicited from the major leadership associations and several representatives from ISLLC also agreed to work on this task. This team, comprised primarily of practitioners, is led by an independent consultant with previous experience in portfolio development in several states and with the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and

Support Consortium (INTASC). The director of ISLLC serves as an ex officio member. The actual workgroup consists of seven principals, an associate superintendent from a state department of education, a local system superintendent, a college professor of educational leadership, a representative of the professional associations active in ISLLC, and a state department testing expert. Further analyses show the group members to access a variety of fronts: one African American male, four African American females, two white females, five white males; two high school principals, two middle school principals, three elementary school principals; four urban, six suburban; and two from the middle Atlantic region, three from southern states, three from the northeast, two from the Midwest, and one from a western state.

This workgroup was charged with designing a handbook of tasks/sample items and policy/implementation recommendations for a professional development portfolio for principals. If possible, the product is to be designed in a manner that will enable individual states to validate the portfolio for licensure purposes should they choose to do so. The portfolio is to be anchored in the ISLLC Standards with strong emphasis on Standards 1 and 2 (teaching and learning). The afore mentioned *Propositions for Quality Professional Development for School Leaders* are to be used as the guiding principles. Members of the workgroup who are representing the Consortium will report to the full Consortium periodically and obtain approval of major recommendations and input from the full membership.

At their first meeting in January 1998, the workgroup agreed that the professional development portfolio should be for all principals---new and experienced---competent to exemplary, and that the process should begin with an assumption of competence and build from that point, i.e., it should not be a deficit model. The group agreed that a possible link to appraisal

of principals could be use by local systems as part of an evaluative process. It could also be used with relicensure if a state's relicensure requirements are based on continuous growth. The focus should be on the process that enhances professional growth with meaningful products as evidence of growth.

The process starts with good selection. Goals can be self-selected; or selected collaboratively with a supervisor; or mandated and linked to site needs as demonstrated in a school's self improvement plan. Once a plan is organized around all six ISLLC Standards---with the emphasis on teaching and learning---a process of gathering artifacts/products, reviewing them with critical friends, exchanging ideas to encourage growth, critiquing the material in relationship to the stated goal(s), and then revisiting for several more weeks will assist the school leader who is completing the portfolio tasks. Periodic "summative" check points would be established in order to begin the process anew. Portfolios, properly designed and utilized, must include reflection in order to demonstrate improvement based on specific criteria as well as provision of evidence of performance.

There was consensus that this professional development process should emphasize collaboration---that it should be about learning, albeit with accountability. At the heart of the process is the collaborative dialogue of school leadership through examination of artifacts of one's work. The process requires a team of colleagues with whom there is trust, support, and sufficient "critical voice" to ensure the rigor that allows for instructional discomfort. This will create tension since it has not been the practice of school administrators to make their work public.

This *Collaborative Professional Development Process* enables a principal to

- establish personal and professional development goals, consistent with district goals, the school's improvement plan, and the ISLLC Standards with a focus on teaching and learning;

- assemble a team of "critical friends" to provide thoughtful, honest critique and constructive criticism of the principal's work, and to help identify resources for addressing issues and solving problems;

- prepare a professional growth portfolio, composed of products developed by the principal to address specific needs faced by the school, that serves as the basis for self-reflection and feedback from the critical friends;

- participate in structured meetings with critical friends as part of a collaborative effort to refine ideas, further develop artifacts, and receive feedback about progress in attaining the principal's professional development goals; and

- engage in continuous reflection leading to summative self-evaluation and revision of the professional development plan.

While there must be balance between process and product, the quality of the product must be exemplary. A "stuff it" box will simply not be acceptable. In a portfolio culture,

principals must be held to high standards, but not be forced into standardization. As a result of this privileging, it was decided that the principal should have primary responsibility for design and implementation of the Collaborative Professional Development Process. "It is important to remember that the objective is not to create outstanding portfolios, but rather to cultivate outstanding teaching and learning" (Kenneth Wolf, 1996) through helping the principal improve his/her practice. The portfolio is part of the process---an artifact of the more important process of continued growth. The role of the district and the supervisor will be supportive. Thus the responsibility for accountability also lies with the principal. This tension between professional autonomy and accountability can be channeled productively through a collaborative approach to professional development that recognizes the ISLLC Standards, the district's goals, and the school's improvement plan. As noted by the portfolio development work group, sharing of power becomes power to accomplish goals.

Intense deliberations on the distinctions between a professional development portfolio and a portfolio to be used for evaluation will continue. There are commonalities between them, but the SBPD project has elected to privilege "professional development" over evaluation. Continuous growth is the expectation. This too will create a tension since "standards based" in and of itself connotes judgements, while to be successful, this standards based professional development model being proposed depends on honest and candid interactions between the principal and the team critiquing the work.

Delivery of services for professional development creates a huge window of opportunity for professional associations and institutions of higher education. Standards Based Professional Development creates a unique opportunity for improvement of practice for principals and other

school leaders. Continued improvement of the practice of school leaders requires collaboration among state departments of education, state standards boards, state and national professional associations for school leaders, institutions of higher education which prepare school leaders, and of course, practitioners. When tied to leadership standards and performance assessment, there will be a dramatic shift in professional development from casual, intermittent and unfocused to cohesive, continuous growth focused on the improvement of instruction and resulting in success for all students.

Using the ISLLC Standards to Improve Learning Outcomes for Students: A Washington, DC Perspective

The Washington, DC Public School System, like many urban school systems across the country, is experiencing a severe decline in the achievement levels of its students as measured by standardized, norm-referenced assessments. In response, the school district is currently engaged in a radical improvement process at every level of the organization. Its major challenge is to prepare its students to live, function, and contribute in the 21st century. The school system's leaders envision that "...the Washington, DC School System will be exemplary by the year 2000". The District's mission is to dramatically improve the learning outcomes for all students. This vision and mission drive every decision made by the system.

To achieve its mission, it is imperative that the district improve the ability of each school to effectively and efficiently meet the educational needs of a highly diverse student population. There is wide-spread agreement among the various stakeholders that the abilities and skills of

school leaders are critical to these efforts. Consequently, the Washington, DC school system is actively engaged in establishing a comprehensive and unified process for improving its principal corps. The school district places a high priority on improving its ability to identify, hire, and retain highly competent and caring school leaders who can deal effectively with the many social and educational issues which confront its students. It also recognizes that efforts of continuous school improvement must be rooted in on-going development and accountability.

Adoption of ISLLC Standards

Very early in its reform effort, the District saw value in affiliating itself with others engaged in similar work. In January 1997, it formally adopted the Standards for School Leaders developed by ISLLC as the foundation upon which to build a unified hiring, development, and evaluation system. The District leadership believes these standards to be remarkably consistent with the system's focus on setting high expectations for performance and fostering collaborative environments. They gave voice to its deeply held belief that effective classroom instruction is achieved through collaboration and coordination among all members of the organization and the larger community---between those responsible for carrying out the teaching and learning processes and those responsible for supporting them.

The knowledge, performances, and dispositions delineated under each standard strongly undergird the District's efforts to increase productivity, maximize resources, promote efficiency at all levels, and ensure administrative, managerial, and community support to the instructional delivery process.

The District is committed to utilizing the ISLLC standards based assessment as a

prerequisite for its Initial License for School Administrators and the compatible portfolio under development as a requirement for its Standard License for School Administrators as well as for later relicensure. It moved quickly to join with five other states as a member of the team developing the school leaders licensure assessments. This involvement has placed the Washington, DC school system on the cutting edge and has propelled its work well beyond what it could have accomplished on its own in the same amount of time.

A Work In Progress

The adoption of the ISLLC Standards comes at a critical point in the school district's improvement efforts---a point in which all of the systems, processes, and procedures related to the hiring, training, and evaluation of school leaders are being critically reviewed and revised. Moreover, participation in the development work has been particularly instructive to the school district's efforts to align these systems utilizing a core set of performance standards consistent with its mission and goals.

The ISLLC Standards will serve as the lens through which decisions regarding candidate identification and selection will be filtered. They will also serve as the foundation for all professional and staff development for school leaders. In addition, a redesigned evaluation system for performance and accountability will be standards based. The work of overhauling these systems is in various stages of development.

To date, the District has participated in the Spring 1997 pilot administration of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) (Form B). It has begun a comprehensive revision of the curriculum for all of its training and development programs which target both aspiring and

incumbent school leaders. Driven by the vision of becoming an exemplary school system by the year 2000, the District is moving quickly to deliver results-oriented, standards based training to school leaders.

In August 1997 the DC Public Schools launched its Principals Leadership Academy within its Leadership and Management Institute in conjunction with the George Washington University. This year long, graduate level (nine graduate or inservice credits), 150 contact hours development program was expressly designed to close the gap between the knowledge, skills and competencies of the district's current principals and those required to meet the ISLLC performance Standards through the new licensure test. All six Standards are addressed in an integrated delivery system focused on instructional leadership and educational management. Supported by their peers through five to eight member learning teams and executive mentors/coaches (retired successful principals), theory and practice are effectively bridged. Supported by contributions from the corporate and philanthropic communities, all 156 principals and six assistant superintendents for elementary, middle/junior, and high schools are participants in the academy.

At the same time, the system's premier pre-service development program, DC LEAD (Leadership in Educational Administration Development), has taken the first step in revising the curriculum in light of the newly adopted ISLLC Standards. Working in collaboration with Trinity College and the Fund for Education and Human Services, the year long, graduate level (six graduate credits) LEAD Administrative Intern Program is expected to provide the requisite knowledge and skills necessary for successful performance on the ISLLC assessment for initial licensure (the SLLA). A full-time administrative internship under the watchful and supportive eye of a mentor principal successfully bridges theory and practice. A similar curriculum alignment is

being undertaken for other aspiring administrator training and development programs, including those specifically designed for assistant principals.

Conversations are currently underway with area universities that will encourage review and revision of their educational administration degree programs and the development of administrative endorsement programs aligned to the District's needs and the ISLLC Standards. Trinity College and George Mason University principal preparation programs have stepped forward as leaders in this effort. The DC Schools Division of Certification and Teacher Education which serves as the "State" accreditation agency for university education programs is working diligently in this area. Trinity College will launch its revised curriculum with its first cohort in the Fall of 1998.

Work is just beginning in the development of a standards based evaluation system for school leaders. ISLLC Standards and the clearly stated expected knowledge, performances, and dispositions will serve as the foundation and backdrop for this work.

In the meantime, the Washington, DC School System fully expects to participate in each phase of the development process beginning with the implementation of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment during the October 1998 administration. The District is looking forward to the full implementation of the portfolio licensure assessment and the standards based model for collaborative professional development.

Summary

School system leaders and the larger community clearly recognize that adequately educating principals and those aspiring to be principals for their changing and expanding roles and

responsibilities is perhaps the single most important task facing the school district. Without a highly trained, competent corps of school based leaders---supported by knowledgeable and skilled central officers---efforts to improve educational outcomes for students are doomed to failure. Today's urban school leaders must effectively deal with such issues as poor academic achievement, ethnic diversity, teen pregnancy, AIDS prevention and education; high dropout rates, safety and security within and immediately surrounding the school, an increased population of homeless children and "boarder Babies", child care, moral values, drugs and related problems in the community which impact on the school environment. Added to these is the lack of the community's faith in public education.

The Standards for School Leaders developed by ISLLC and adopted by the District of Columbia Public Schools speak eloquently to these issues and give rise to the hope that there is a logical and systematic approach to assessing job readiness, providing continuous development, and implementing a fair and equitable system for evaluation of performance and accountability. The fact that the Standards are rooted in teaching and learning, technical competence, and ethical leadership make them extremely powerful tools for systemic improvement. The District of Columbia values its involvement with the ISLLC projects and fully expects that its commitment of time and resources will result in dramatic improvements in the achievement levels of all students.

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